

**White Coat Ceremony**  
**DDS Class of 2026 / IDS Class of 2026 / DH Class of 2025**  
**University of the Pacific, Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry**  
**Palace of Fine Arts Theatre, San Francisco, California**  
**July 20, 2024**

**Nader A. Nadershahi, DDS, MBA, EdD**  
**Dean and Vice Provost**

Good morning. My name is Nader Nadershahi and I have the privilege of serving as Dean of the University of the Pacific, Arthur A. Dugoni School of Dentistry. On behalf of our faculty, staff, students, residents, alumni, and patients – I extend a warm welcome from the entire Dugoni School family.

We are so happy to mark this special moment in front of family and friends in the room with us – and those around the world who are watching online.

Our students have worked incredibly hard to be up on stage with us today!

This year's event is special because we have students from our Dental Hygiene and DDS programs, as well as for the very first time, students from our expanded International Dental Studies program that includes IDS students from both our San Francisco and Sacramento campuses. Welcome to these newest IDS students who are joining us from 16 countries around the world!

This White Coat Ceremony marks a very important transition to providing care for your patients.

As a Dugoni School graduate myself, I can still remember my first patient interaction 32 years ago like it was yesterday. I even remember my patient's name and the concern that we were addressing on that day. I look forward to hearing about the memories that you will make as you interact with your patients.

So how did this tradition of a white coat ceremony come to be?

The white coat has served as the pre-eminent symbol of doctors and healers for over 100 years. However, you may be surprised to learn that prior to the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, doctors wore... not white, but black.

Black attire was, and is, considered formal. Consequently, until about 1900, doctors wore black since medical encounters were thought of as serious and formal matters.

At the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> and the beginning of the 20<sup>th</sup> centuries, when health care became a truly scientific enterprise, the "pureness" of healthcare became reflected in the garb of doctors and nurses. The white coat became the symbol of medical authority and

respect, as advance upon advance firmly established the patient-provider relationship as a beneficial encounter.

The first full-fledged White Coat Ceremony in medicine took place in 1993 at the Columbia University College of Physicians and Surgeons.

However, the very first White Coat Ceremony at a dental school started with – guess who? It started with us – the Dugoni School of Dentistry – back in the mid-1990s. During that time, Dr. Arthur A. Dugoni, our late Dean Emeritus, visited a medical white coat ceremony at the University of Minnesota. He was so touched by the event that he brought the idea back to our school's leadership team, and we became the very first dental school to hold such an event. I am pleased to share that it is a practice in almost all health education programs now.

The white coat you receive today signifies to patients that you will strive:

- To regard them with the utmost respect
- To treat their illnesses to the best of your ability
- To listen carefully; and
- To preserve the dignity of each individual and the privacy of information shared as a result of the relationship between care giver and patient.

To all the families, significant others, and friends here today and watching online, these outstanding students would not be here without your continued love, support, and encouragement. Thank you for what you continue to do for them.

I would like to ask all of our students to please stand for a moment. Students, please give your loved ones here and online a standing round of applause for all that they have done to help you reach this special moment in your lives and education.

You may be seated.

I would like to acknowledge and thank our Alumni Association, represented today by Dr. Amanda Rae Kronquist, Alumni Association President, who will give each student a lapel pin after they receive their coat. The alumni support students in many ways during their education, and have co-sponsored the white coats, along with the Office of Development. I would like to also recognize Dr. John Kim, sitting in the audience - also a Dugoni School graduate and current President of our Dugoni School Foundation Board. Thank you, John.

Also, please join me in thanking all the volunteers helping out today, and a special thanks to Sandra Derian, our Communications Coordinator, for all of her hard work on the details of today's event.

## Closing Remarks

Will the white coat honorees please remain standing?

Distinguished guests, please join me in applauding these talented individuals on receiving their white coats and for what they have achieved in their professional growth.

Let me be one of the first to offer my personal congratulations to you. The faculty and staff at the Dugoni School and all your loved ones and supporters are very proud of you.

As an oral health care provider, others will look to you for help. Through your unique knowledge and skills, you will be able to reduce human pain and suffering, treat disease – and ultimately help people lead healthier and happier lives. You are about to fulfill your dream of providing help to others in your community.

I would like to share four thoughts with you today that spell the word HELP:

**H - Humanism** – As you prepare for your future in clinical practice, I encourage you to lean into what makes you special so that you may serve others at your very best. I encourage you to lean into your humanity. I know that our humanistic education is preparing you for that. Our “Head, Heart, Hands” philosophy emphasizes technical knowledge, communication skills, and a humanistic approach to patient care. Lean into your humanity as you interact with patients from all walks of life.

**E - Ethics** – As we heard today, the foundation of a strong relationship with your patient begins with the trust that you will earn through your ethics. Never underestimate the importance of what you bring to your patients through your care and through your ethics.

**L - Leadership** – You will be leaders in the dental operatories – from the treatment planning decisions, to communicating with patients, to interacting with fellow practitioners and staff. I know that your leadership and confidence will only grow from this day on. Leadership is one of the core values at the Dugoni School. It extends far beyond the dental practice as exemplified by our leaders from the organized profession. I encourage you to stay involved in leadership opportunities here at the Dugoni School and once you graduate. And finally...

**P - Philanthropy** – You may have heard a famous quote from Winston Churchill: *“You make a living by what you get. You make a life by what you give.”* Philanthropy can be expressed in many ways – from volunteering time, donating your expertise, or donating money. As students, you have been supported in so many ways by your family, friends, and other loved ones. I hope you build a passion and interest in philanthropy so that you, too, can make a difference in the lives of others.

I know that you certainly will touch many lives and improve the health of your patients.

You will have many special moments and connections with people during the course of your career. Each of these moments will make an impact on someone else.

I hope you feel proud of your amazing accomplishment today. The future of our great profession shines brighter than ever because of what you will do in your careers and the difference you will make for others!

On behalf of the University of the Pacific, Dugoni School family, congratulations to our white coat recipients, and thank you all again for joining us today. At this time, you are invited to leave the theatre and go outside to take pictures in this beautiful setting.

I hope you all enjoy the rest of this wonderful day.

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